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NIDA Contacts: Dorie Hightower or
Sara Rosario Wilson
301-443-6245
media@nida.nih.gov

Contacto en Español: 301-594-6145

NIDA Launches Centers of Excellence for Drug Abuse Information

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), today announced the establishment of four Centers of Excellence for Physician Information—these Centers will serve as national models to support the advancement of addiction awareness, prevention, and treatment in primary care practices. The NIDA Centers of Excellence (NIDA COEs) will target physicians-in-training, including medical students and resident physicians in primary care specialties (e.g., internal medicine, family practice, and pediatrics).

The NIDA COEs are being developed in collaboration with the American Medical Association's (AMA) Research Education Consortium and are part of NIDA's ongoing Physician Outreach Program. The NIDA COEs will identify drug addiction knowledge gaps, develop educational materials and resources specifically designed for physicians in training to address those gaps, and determine the most effective means of delivering this information. As a result, the COEs seek to raise the awareness among primary care physicians of drug addiction as a health issue and to further facilitate the dissemination of knowledge on how best to prevent, diagnose, and treat patients struggling with prescription and illicit drug abuse.

"These new Centers of Excellence are just one step in a broad cooperative effort to increase awareness among primary care physicians and other health professionals, as well as patients, about drug addiction as a major public health issue," said NIH Director Dr. Elias A. Zerhouni.

NIDA is establishing the Centers at academic medical institutions across the country. The NIDA COEs for 2007 will be located at Creighton University School of Medicine, Omaha, Nebraska; the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine in collaboration with Drexel University College of Medicine; the University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences; and the Massachusetts Consortium of Medical Schools, including the University of

Massachusetts Medical School, Tufts University School of Medicine, Boston University School of Medicine, and Harvard Medical School/Cambridge Health Alliance. The NIDA COEs will focus on a variety of areas, including prescription drug abuse, methamphetamine abuse and addiction, co morbid substance abuse and mental illness, and other issues related to drug abuse.

“This AMA-NIDA collaboration is part of NIDA’s ongoing activities to provide physicians and other medical professionals with the tools and skills needed to incorporate NIDA-funded research findings into their clinical practice,” said NIDA Director Dr. Nora D. Volkow.

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The National Institute on Drug Abuse is a component of the National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NIDA supports most of the world’s research on the health aspects of drug abuse and addiction. The Institute carries out a large variety of programs to ensure the rapid dissemination of research information and its implementation in policy and practice. Fact sheets on the health effects of drugs of abuse and information on NIDA research and other activities can be found on the NIDA home page at www.drugabuse.gov.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH)—The Nation’s Medical Research Agency—includes 27 Institutes and Centers and is a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It is the primary Federal agency for conducting and supporting basic, clinical and translational medical research, and it investigates the causes, treatments, and cures for both common and rare diseases. For more information about NIH and its programs, visit www.nih.gov.

